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Public Policy Update – August 2026

The Conversation Continues: Join Us for the Peninsula Chamber's 2026 Legislative Roundtable Series

By Chris Davidson, Government Relations Consultant

Although the 2026 General Assembly session has concluded and most new laws took effect on July 1, the policy conversations shaping Virginia's future are just getting started. Many of the issues debated in Richmond this year (including workforce affordability, energy, infrastructure, economic development, and the role of government) will continue to evolve long before legislators return in January.

To help our members stay informed and engaged, the Virginia Peninsula Chamber is pleased to present a new series of Legislative Roundtables this fall. Each 90-minute session will bring together business leaders, elected officials, subject matter experts, and community stakeholders for thoughtful discussions about the issues affecting the Peninsula and the Commonwealth. Rather than formal presentations, these roundtables are intended to encourage open dialogue, explore emerging policy ideas, and help shape the Chamber's advocacy efforts in the years ahead.

All sessions will be held from **1:30–3:00 p.m. at the Virginia Peninsula Chamber.**

August 11 – The Future of the Nonprofit Sector

Nonprofit organizations strengthen our workforce, improve quality of life, and often provide services that neither government nor the private sector can deliver alone. This discussion will examine opportunities for stronger partnerships between nonprofits, businesses, and government while exploring issues such as workforce development, behavioral health, volunteerism, funding, and regulatory challenges.

Recent state budget investments in education, workforce initiatives, and behavioral health are amplifying the increasing importance of nonprofits in helping our communities.

August 27 – Data Centers & Virginia's Digital Infrastructure

Virginia remains the world's leading hub for data centers, creating tremendous economic opportunities while also raising important questions about energy production, transmission capacity, land use, taxation, and community impacts.

This session will explore how the Commonwealth can remain competitive while supporting responsible growth. Topics may include electric grid reliability, offshore wind, nuclear energy, broadband expansion, cybersecurity, and the infrastructure needed to support Virginia's growing digital economy. Several proposals considered during the 2026 General Assembly reflected these ongoing challenges.

September 10 – DEAL: Building the Industries That Drive Hampton Roads

The Hampton Roads Alliance has identified **Defense, Energy, Aerospace, and Logistics (DEAL)** as the four industries that will define the region's long-term economic success. Hampton Roads possesses unique competitive advantages in each of these sectors, but maintaining that advantage requires smart public policy and strategic investment.

Discussion topics will include military readiness, shipbuilding, aerospace innovation, advanced manufacturing, workforce development, energy infrastructure, port expansion, and technology commercialization. Many of these priorities were reflected in legislation and budget investments adopted during the 2026 General Assembly session.

September 24 – Government at Every Level: Federal, State & Local

Today's business environment is increasingly shaped by decisions made in Washington, Richmond, and local government simultaneously. Understanding how these layers of government interact, and how businesses can effectively engage with each, is becoming more important than ever.

This conversation will examine issues including regulation, economic development, transportation, permitting, local authority, and intergovernmental coordination. Recent debates over housing, workforce policy, transportation funding, and local government authority illustrate how closely these levels of government have become intertwined (and sometimes at odds with one another!)

October 15 – The Affordability Challenge: Housing, Healthcare & Childcare

Across Virginia, employers consistently identify affordability as one of their greatest workforce challenges. The cost of housing, healthcare, childcare, transportation, and everyday living increasingly influences whether businesses can recruit and retain talented employees.

This roundtable will explore practical policy solutions that support both families and employers while maintaining Virginia's economic competitiveness. Participants will discuss workforce housing, childcare availability, healthcare access, insurance costs, and other issues that received significant attention during the 2026 legislative session and in the recently adopted state budget.

We Hope You'll Join the Conversation

One of our Chamber's greatest strengths is our ability to bring diverse voices together around important issues facing our business community. These Legislative Roundtables are designed to provide members with timely information, encourage meaningful dialogue, and help identify policy priorities before the General Assembly convenes again in January.

Whether your interests lie in economic development, workforce issues, infrastructure, nonprofit partnerships, or public policy, we encourage you to join us. Together, we can help shape thoughtful, business-focused solutions that strengthen both the Virginia Peninsula and the Commonwealth as a whole.